

Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association

FAX and Mail Distribution

February 16, 2007

Brig. Gen. Gregg F. Martin
Commander and Division Engineer
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Northwestern Division
P.O. Box 2870
Portland, OR 97208-2870

Steve Wright, Administrator
Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, OR 97208-3621

D. Robert Lohn
Regional Administrator
Northwest NOAA Fisheries
7600 Sand Point Way NE
Seattle, WA 98115-0070

Dear Messrs. Martin, Wright & Lohn:

The Columbia Snake River Irrigators Association (CSRIA) is watching with concern any Federal Action Agency consideration for changing the elevation of John Day Pool under the BiOp remand process (*National Wildlife Federation, et al. v. National Marine Fisheries Service, et al.*, No. 01-640-RE). We have previously filed in that litigation extensive analyses of the harmful effect of such actions, as documented by the Federal Action Agencies and others. Drawing down the level of John Day Pool threatens not only to harm water users, when reservoir levels are reduced below minimum irrigation pool (MIP), but also to destroy area wildlife refuges, disrupt community recreation sites, and injure salmon through increased predation and more difficult adult passage.

This policy initiative has been the subject of repeated studies, as summarized in previous declarations submitted to you, all of which have rejected it as either lacking merit and or being generally destructive. The initiative has very significant regional economic consequences, as the 200,000 acres of farmland served by irrigators pumping water from the John Day Pool are associated with \$440 million of direct and secondary income.

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We do not believe that it is appropriate—or in the public interest—for your agencies to continue consideration of a very significant policy measure that has been rejected time and again in open, public studies. We therefore request that you direct your representatives participating in the remand process to cease further consideration of drawing down the level of the John Day Pool per proposed actions for the Federal Columbia River Power System within the remand process.

Nor do we think it appropriate for your agencies to receive and consider non-public information provided by fish advocates purporting to demonstrate benefits from drawing down John Day Pool without permitting affected interests to respond to such submissions. We therefore also request that you direct your representatives participating in the remand process to inform other participants that they will not accept any submissions concerning the elevation of John Day Pool, that cannot be released to affected interests, including but not limited to the Columbia Snake River Irrigators Association, and to release to us any such analyses received to date.

Finally, it also is disturbing to see a fundamental lack of appreciation for the fragile political dynamics of the Columbia River system, relative to Tribal fisheries and their empirically measurable impacts to ESA-listed stocks. An attempt by any party to establish a John Day Pool drawdown will cast greater light on the impacts of the Columbia River fisheries and quickly escalate actions to a much broader litigation front, well beyond the existing BiOp remand parameters.

We therefore request an opportunity to meet with you to discuss openly this issue, in Portland, and we will be contacting your offices to set a date and time.

Respectfully,



Darryll Olsen, Ph.D.
CSRIA Board Rep.

cc: Office of Gov. Christine Gregoire, WA
and Interested Parties